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March 12, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I write to express my deep concern regarding the allegations raised in a recent news publication¹ detailing potential structural defects in the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge, which crosses the Hudson River and connects Rockland and Westchester Counties in New York's 17th Congressional District. Public safety is of paramount importance, and any claims that the bridge may contain dangerous structural deficiencies must be immediately and thoroughly investigated. I urge you to use your authority to open an investigation into these claims and implore you to work with the New York State Department of Transportation to ensure proper inspections are conducted to assure the public of the safety of the bridge.

On March 8, 2021, the *Times Union* published an article detailing numerous alarming issues that arose during construction of the Mario Cuomo Bridge.² Key to the article are firsthand reports that dozens of bolts had broken at the project's main assembly site and on assembled pieces already installed at the bridge. Analysis cited in the report indicates that as many as one million bolts used to assemble the bridge may be defective.³ This is highly alarming because, as you know, bolt failures can be an indication of a potentially serious problem that puts public safety at risk.

¹ Brendan Lyons, *Broken bolts: Structural problems on the Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge were covered up*, Times Union (March 8, 2021), <https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/mario-cuomo-bridge-structural-problems-covered-up-15594755.php>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

The Mario Cuomo Bridge is at the heart of New York's 17th Congressional District and serves thousands of New Yorkers and out-of-state travelers every day. As many as 144,000 vehicles cross the bridge daily.⁴ It is key to the economic success of the region and critical to the livelihood of my constituents, many thousands of whom use the bridge to commute to and from work. More recently, because the Governor has declined to establish a mass vaccination center in Rockland County, many Rocklanders are having to cross the Mario Cuomo Bridge simply to get vaccinated. Therefore, the importance of this issue to my district cannot be overstated. New Yorkers deserve to have confidence in the safety of the bridge, especially those whose livelihoods depend on it.

As public servants, we have a responsibility to ensure the people we represent have the information they need to keep themselves and their families safe. I urge you to immediately begin a thorough and transparent investigation in coordination with the New York Department of Transportation into the structural integrity of the bridge and address any concerns about its safety.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mondaire Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mondaire" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Jones".

Mondaire Jones
Member of Congress

CC: Stephanie Pollack, Acting Administrator, Federal Highway Administration

⁴ Matt Coyne, *More cars making their way across the Mario Cuomo Bridge*, Lohud (September 29, 2017), <https://www.lohud.com/story/news/local/tappan-zee-bridge/2017/09/29/more-cars-making-their-way-across-mario-cuomo-bridge/712196001/>